

Mini-lecture Knowing About Children

Definition: The process of 1) having academic child development knowledge about the age child you teach, and 2) applying that knowledge to real child-child conflict situations in the classroom.

Goal: To respond supportively, effectively, and reasonably to children's conflict.

Knowledge of children's development:

- Helps teachers **teach through conflict** rather than just manage children's behavior
- using a disciplinary response to conflict
- Helps teachers **set reasonable expectations** for children's behavior
- Helps teachers see **the value of conflict** as a way of enhancing development and supporting growth

Children's development occurs within a full range of abilities and in an uneven pattern. Diane Levin (1994) states that teachers successful in supporting children in peaceful conflict resolution will know about:

- the developmental level of the child they teach
- the individual children they teach
- the developmental sequence

The following *Children and Conflict: A Developmental Perspective Chart* lists both social-emotional and physical-cognitive skills of children as they relate to conflict and conflict resolution, from the ages of eighteen months through seven years.

Age	Social-emotional skills	Physical-intellectual skills
18 mos-2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -very attached to parent -refers to self by name -prefers to play by self or with an adult -shows concern or even distress for others -has words for some feelings -offers to share and takes back -looks to adult for social skill development -pushing, hitting or biting can be a way to say "hello, I want to play" -Nine conflicts per hour is typical in groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -recognizes differences among people -accomplishes learning by own exploration -initiates adult actions -understands simple phrases, follows simple directions *egocentric -uses body language and some words to communicate -pushing, hitting and biting can be a way to explore physical properties, including the human body
2-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -plays near other children -knows gender identity -begins to understand and express feelings with words -plays house/family -participates in simple group activities -begins forming attachments to others -defends own possessions: "everything I touch is mine." -pushing, hitting, biting can be a way of expressing desires or connecting with other children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -watches other children -recognizes self in mirror -language develops -symbolically uses objects in play -listens to stories, sings songs, vocabulary increases -explores environment when emotionally secure *egocentric -problem-solving strategy is inflexible; answer to conflict is "I should get what I want." -cannot connect one resolution to other conflicts
3-4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -begins to interact and play with other children -interested in sharing but not quite ready -enjoys pretending -relates personal experiences -makes choices -emotions are intense -has more conflicts with friends than acquaintances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -learns through observing and imitating -uses words to verbalize feelings, desires -is imaginative -begins to be aware of past and present -asks questions for information -is *egocentric -thinks others are playing same game most times
4-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -high interest in playing with peers -engages in conversation -language includes explanations and questioning -increasingly understands what other children need to know in a conflict situation -develops social graces, able to negotiate -begins to develop empathy -has more conflict resolution strategies -power is common conflict issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -incorporates plans and verbal directions in play -learns to reason and communicate -can think through solutions (instead of solving problems physically) -offers more information in order to work out an agreement -able to read other people's cues (facial expression, and voice) -able to name feelings rather than just act them out -play involves "power" characters -empowered and learns when able to make choices
5 to 7 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -engages with other children in cooperative play -can respond to conflict appropriately, depending on situation and people involved -considers another person's point of view in conflict -issues of fairness are important in social relationships -not always sure how to cope with anger -may use power inappropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -negotiates and finds solutions with peers -can give and receive information -can take appropriate turns in a conversation, will listen with help -can participate in determining classroom rules -can learn positive coping skills for anger and frustration with help -not until about age 7 can children consider thoughts and feelings of self and someone else at the same time

*Egocentric: a child is unable to consider or take into account another's point of view. Children in their earliest years (birth to age seven or eight) are beginning to develop the ability to take another point of view besides their own. Taking another's perspective is an intellectual task, that manifests itself in social emotional behavior, during the early childhood years.